

Directions Start from the railway station or the Blaydon Shopping Centre car park.

- From **railway station** walk east with railway boundary wall on your left, until you reach a level crossing. **Or**, from **Blaydon shopping centre car park**, use pedestrian crossing in front of flyover, turn right, and follow road around under flyover, and cross carefully to the level crossing.
- Cross railway, turn left into Factory Road and then onto the Keelman's Way path along riverside. Stop to look at the interpretation panel just past the refinery site **A**. Follow the path with the river to your right to an underpass under the railway on your left. Keep on the Keelman's Way for another 60m to see a sculpture commemorating the Blaydon Races. Retrace your steps to the railway bridge, turn right underneath it and follow track up to junction with another path.
- Turn right in front of the road bridge **B** and follow the path up to the road. Turn right **C** and walk alongside the road for 500m (look out for the Blaydon Races Heritage Plaque on your right). Just past the bus shelter cross the road carefully at the island and turn left, back alongside the main road.
- After about 100m, where a track leaves the road to a raised platform, bear right and sharp right again up a track marked 'Public Footpath 82 – Hexham Old Road 650m'. Follow this wide path upwards, the lower section of which can be very muddy after rain. Where the path levels, ignore the left fork that climbs the bankside and keep on the main path which leads to a distinctive wide track between ivy-covered banks, later with a stream in a gully down to your right. **D**
- As you leave the wood keep to the right of the building ahead **E** following a wide grassy path. (A short cut can be made by instead turning left at the building, following the gravel drive up to join the road – see map). Out on the tarmac road turn left, watching for passing traffic as there is no footpath **Δ**. Bear left at the next road junction - this is the 'Lead Road'. **F**
- Look for a kissing gate on the left with a sign for 'Summerhouse Hill Meadows'. Go through the gate and bear right to make the short detour to the remains of the summerhouse, from where there are fine views up and down the Tyne **G**. Retrace your steps to the road, turn left and carry on downhill.
- At the row of houses on the left go through the car parking area opposite into Blaydon Burn Nature Reserve. Follow the path at the end of the rough parking area and descend the steps. **Δ** Take care as these can be slippery after rain or frost and there is no handrail. At the track at the foot of the steps turn left. Follow the track, with the Blaydon Burn on your right, back to the road bridge. Go under the road bridge and turn right to cross the old turnpike bridge. This path climbs to rejoin the main road as it heads to the Blaydon roundabout. **H** The station is just ahead of you on the left.

If returning to the Shopping Centre car park either take the footbridge over the main road and go through shopping precinct, or follow the path alongside the railway to the level crossing and retrace your earlier steps back to the car park.

If you would like to discover more about the area, a leaflet describing a walk along Blaydon Burn is available from local libraries, Path Head Water Mill, or to download from: www.gateshead.gov.uk/Leisure%20and%20Culture/countryside/sites/blaydon.aspx

Discovering lost industrial Blaydon

Walk length 3 miles/5km

Terrain This walk covers rough uneven ground, inclines and steps as well as roadside paths. Stout walking shoes recommended. Not suitable for anyone with restricted mobility.

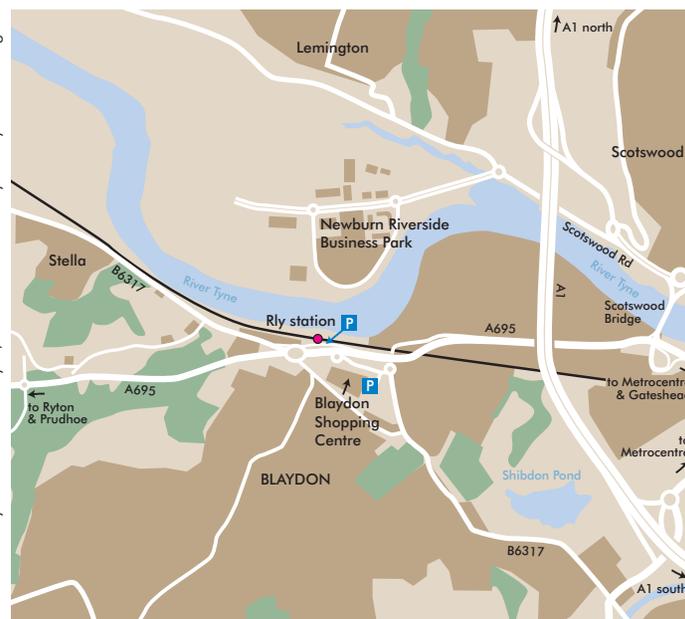
OS map Explorer 316 'Newcastle-upon-Tyne'

P There is some parking near the station and plenty of options at the shopping centre.

 For local travel information got to www.traveline.info

 At Blaydon Shopping Centre.

Discover more about the lead smelters and carriers on two other walks, at Dukesfield Arches and Sinderhope, both in Northumberland. Available from local outlets or to download from www.dukesfield.org.uk



Walk devised by Susan and David Lynn, Wintonon Local History Society. Leaflet design: Marcus Byron

Please ask us if you would like this leaflet summarised in another format.
Friends of the North Pennines 07935 337210

The Dukesfield Smelters and Carriers Project is led by the Friends of the North Pennines in partnership with Hexhamshire and Slaley Parish Councils and has the active support of the landowner, Allendale Estates. It is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the generous support of other sponsors. www.dukesfield.org.uk

The Friends – working to keep the North Pennines special for tomorrow.
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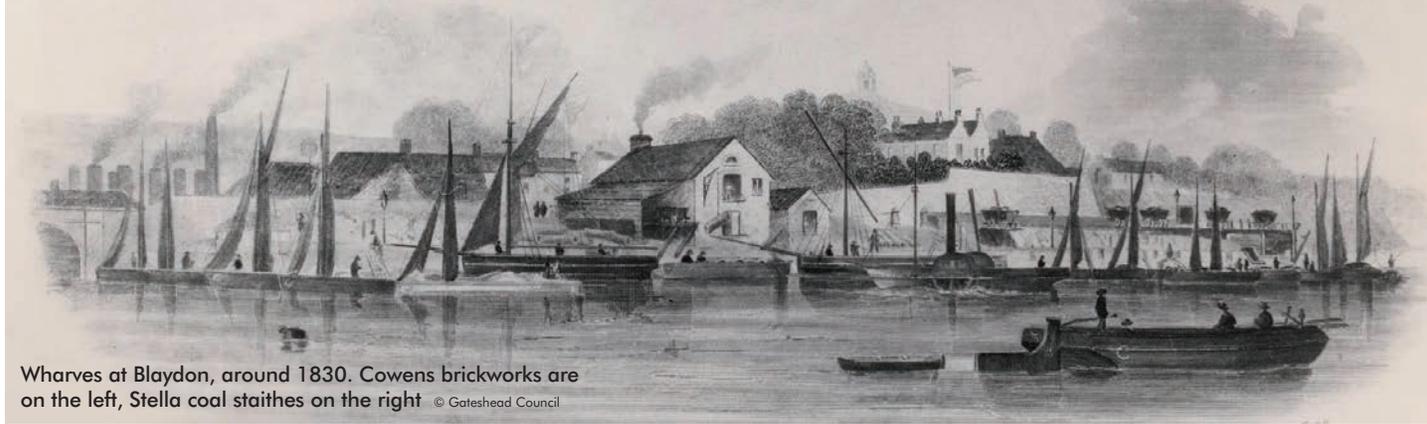
DUKESFIELD
 Smelters and Carriers Project

Lost industrial Blaydon



A 3 mile walk of contrasts between urban streets and rural woods and views, exploring traces of the lost lead industry and other remains in the Blaydon area.





Wharves at Blaydon, around 1830. Cowens brickworks are on the left, Stella coal staithe on the right © Gateshead Council

A The metal railings and section of stone wall are the boundaries of what was once the Blackett and Beaumont families' main **refinery** for processing lead into silver, litharge and refined lead in the 18th and 19th centuries. Lead was brought down to the Tyne here from smelting mills miles inland to the south west to be refined, loaded onto boats and taken downstream to Newcastle for manufacturing and building use, or export. The now empty riverside banks westwards from here were once filled with wharves.

The **Newcastle to Carlisle Railway** line was built in the early 1830s. It was deliberately laid to pass right next to the refinery, thus greatly reducing transport costs compared to the earlier convoys of Galloway ponies. The Hexham to Blaydon section of the line was the first to be opened in 1834.

B The track in front of the modern road bridge over Blaydon Burn is the **Hexham South Turnpike** opened in 1776, with the intention of attracting the horse borne lead carriage from the older and rougher lead road over the hills to the south. The Toll House was on the site of the brick structure to your right.

C The distinctive conical brick kiln seen across the river is the **Lemington Glass Cone**, the sole survivor of four such kilns built in 1797. Glass making was an important Tyneside industry, exploiting locally abundant coal, sand and red lead. The Lemington works were well placed to consume litharge (used to create red lead) produced at the Blaydon refinery.

D A well preserved section of **waggonway**, once one of many connecting inland coal mines with the Tyne from the 17th century onwards. This way ran from Chopwell, taking in Towneley Main pit near Stargate en route to Stella Staithe. There is no evidence that waggonways were used for carrying lead as well as coal although their respective routes often ran close to each other. Transhipping lead pieces from ponies at the railheads would have been laborious and competed with colliery traffic.

E **Path Head Water Mill** was built by the Towneley family in 1730, working as a corn mill until 1828. Lying next to the waggonway and the lead road it was well placed to provide hard feed to the hundreds of horses passing its doors each day. The mill has been restored by the Vale Mill Trust and is open to the public. See gateway sign for opening hours and charges.



Cottage at Path Head. Most of the village at the top of Summerhill has long gone.

F The **lead road** was used from at least the mid-17th century by 'trains' of Galloway ponies either carrying pieces of lead ('pigs') on special saddles or pulling two-wheeled carts. The road ran along the ridge from Hedley, through Leadgate, Coalburns and Greenside. In the 18th century lead was brought overland from smelting mills up to 30 miles away, much of it staged through the Leadhills depot, at Apperley Bank Foot near Stocksfield. Another branch of the lead road ran direct to Blaydon across the head of Blaydon Burn, past the present St. Thomas More School and down Blaydon Bank or 'Silver Hill'.

In this sketch from the early 1800s you can just about make out a lead pig on the cart, stamped with the letters **W.BLACKETT** – one of the largest mine owners in the North Pennines.



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G The brick-built **Summerhill** originally had a domed roof when erected by the Widdringtons of Stella Hall in the 18th century. Statues here on Image Hill once included that of Giuseppe Garibaldi – commemorating his visit to his friend Joseph Cowen in the 1860s. The statue's head can now be seen in Blaydon Library. Cowen and his son made their money from mining and making firebricks and clay products – you pass the remnants of Cowens 'Low' Brickworks at the bottom of Blaydon Burn.



Cowens High Brickworks © Gateshead Council

H Across to your right above the roundabout stands the derelict **Blaydon House**. It was built in around 1820 for John Mulcaster, Colonel Beaumont's agent, who was also manager for the lead refinery (**A**). The house occupies a fittingly commanding position, just to the right of Blaydon Bank, down which came many of the lead carriers and their Galloway trains, and with an elevated view across to the riverside staithe and lead refinery.